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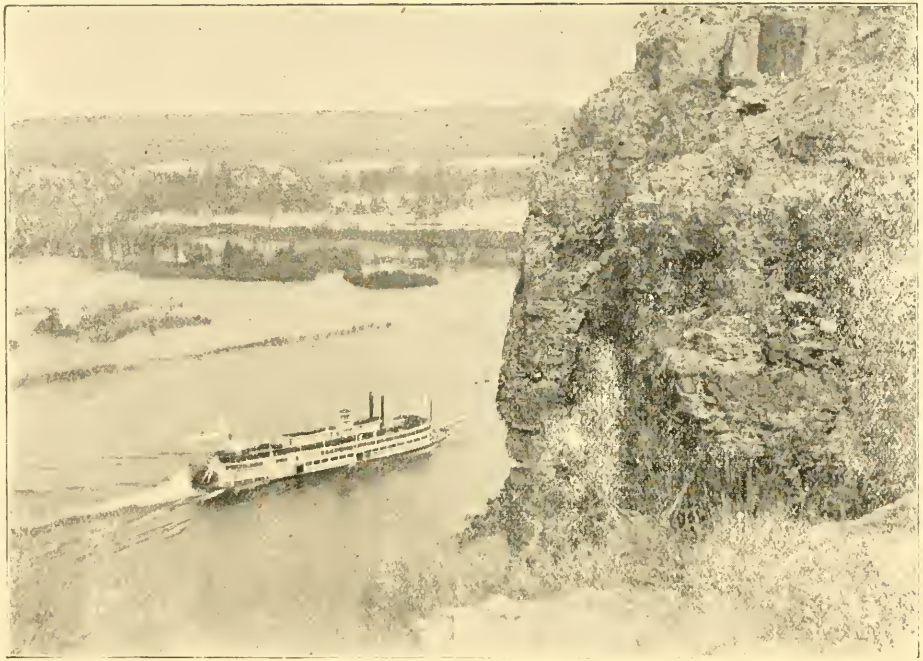
True Garden of Eden

Along the Stream

By H. J. METCALF.

Price - - - 35 Cent



STEAMER DUBUQUE BOUND SOUTH. MT. IDA TO THE RIGHT.

THE TRUE GARDEN OF EDEN.

PREFACE.

THE fame of the Mississippi, mighty "Father of Waters," is every year more widespread, and each season hundreds of tourists, gathered from all winds, are added to the multitude who make it the shrine of their summer pilgrimage. There is no more interesting spot on the face of the globe than this delightful and romantic region, and it should be included in the itinerary of every summer traveler. As a summer resort Lansing is rapidly assuming that distinction to which superior advantages make it so justly entitled. The atmosphere is cool and refreshing, the surroundings picturesque, the facilities for bathing and boating unexcelled, while to the enthusiastic fisherman the abundance of trout, pickerel and black bass afford unrivaled opportunity for a complete enjoyment of the sport. These constitute but a few of the many charms and advantages with which nature has endowed it. The lover of social gaity finds new fields for enjoyment and perhaps for triumph, while he who takes delight in the quiet scenes in field and woods, finds ample scope for his in the abundance of wild and natural beauty with which the larger territory to the north abounds. In some parts the banks are heavily wooded, in others green meadows meet the water's edge, and here and there a stern, rugged cliff lends pleasing variety to the scene. Then the student of history finds much of interest in the ancient towns along its border. Here he beholds such landmarks as are seen elsewhere only by distant and tiresome journeys to foreign lands. No one can attempt to describe the ever changing panorama as seen from the deck of the steamer, sailing down the noble river. The low, flat land along the bank, with farm houses nestling among the trees, is a scene of quiet rural beauty, which suddenly changes to a veritable fairyland of brilliant coloring and ever changing form. By a sudden rounding of a jutting headland one is brought face to face with a fragment of the Rhine bank or a bright piece of oriental scenery, with its myriad forms and rich coloring. The praises of this veritable paradise on which nature has so bountifully bestowed her gifts have been sounded throughout the land, and it is not strange that its advantages and beauties are becoming more and more fully recognized and appreciated as the years pass swiftly by.

When your time comes to let loose of business for a few days; when summer calls, and you feel that it is time to be up and off to the cool woods and the quiet of pastoral surroundings, you will be in too much of a hurry to choose your place of outing wisely. Perhaps you are thinking now that your outing this summer will be brief; possibly not at all. But

wait! When the hot breath of the July day curls the straw of your hat; when the asphalt streets and country sidewalks are like the original lakes of pitch from which the black stuff comes, then you will swear with Mustapha that "no place is hotter than ———," and you will flee to escape it. You will want to go some place, not too remote from home, yet which offers rest and coolness. Somewhere within sound of the telephone bell and telegraph click. There is no need to long for the seashore. It's too far away, and there's nothing that the sea has to offer that the great inland seas by which we are surrounded lack. No place on earth has developed more or prettier spots for summer rest than our own state of Iowa. Every blessing of nature, seemingly, has been showered upon us. Here in Lansing the greatest charm we can boast of is its versatility. To those who are attached to the luxuries of social life it is not necessary to say that it offers all such advantages that any of the so called fashionable watering places of the sea coast can lay claim to. But there are those who like to wander away into a more quiet and secluded surrounding; those to whom the pursuit of excitement is secondary to the desire for peace and rest. And these, also, may be satisfied, for Lansing has many such quiet spots.

In writing this book I little realized the task I had undertaken and the enormous amount of labor and time consumed in collecting the material for my sketch. The contents are not entirely original with the author, but are of such a nature as to add greatly to the entertaining features bound within these covers. For the past four years, during odd moments, the author has labored industriously toward a completion of those hopes which at last have become a reality. Perhaps there is no more ideal spot in the world more thoroughly adapted to the writing of such a story as Lansing. The grand old bluffs, which for centuries, perhaps, have kept guard over the peaceful little valley, themighty Mississippi, world famed and marvelous in its grandeur and last, but not least, the town itself, all form a vision too beautiful for words to describe. I feel my inferiority as a litterateur in trying to portray the sights and scenes to be found within the borders of this fairyland, and trust those who peruse these pages will make full allowance for the "fish stories" and other tales of a somewhat doubtful nature which they may read. To write a book of this kind without adding a trifle of the "extraordinary" would be like fishing without bait, and as a cure for the "blues" and that "tired feeling," such reading is indispensible. Being an ardent lover of all things picturesque and beautiful I have endeavored, to the best of my ability, to set forth in word pictures the beauty and grandeur to be found in the high crowning bluffs and verdure clad valleys of "The True Garden of Eden," the Upper Mississippi Valley. To those of my readers who love nature and are converts of that old catcher of whales, Isaac Walton, I es-

pecially recommend this volume. If you have never walked through the woods and fields on a bright summer's morning and listened to the multitude of sounds which proclaim the advent of summer, then you have never lived.

My principal object in writing this book is to make others see nature as she should be seen. Its theme is the ripple of the brook; the murmur of the trees; the swish of the wave and the splash of the oar. It is the silence of the shady road; the quietude of the deserted camp; the whirl of the rapids and the grandeur of God's monuments, the hills.

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ADVENT OF SUMMER.

Summer dreams are in the sound —
Dreams in the warm and yellow ground.
Dreams in the ripening leaves of trees
And in the drone of lazy bees.—*E. C. Thompson.*

CHAPTER I.

THE ADVENT OF SUMMER.

SUMMER days have come, those soft, sensuous, dreamy days of red and gold, with veils of silver mist at sunrise and skeins of purple clouds at twilight. The air is hazy with the smoke of fires burning on the hillsides. The stems of the young birches show white in the fast deepening shadows; green leaves strew the ground, and tall flowers flame in the garden beds. The rising sun burns its way through a low lying mist that hides the river, and flashes its search light rays over the sleeping city. The glimmering tops of the tall chimneys catch the signal and answer in belching clouds of gray smoke, that turn to gold as they float upward in the morning air. The long row of many eyed houses, cresting the river front, blush in the dazzling light and throw countless smoke flags from numerous chimneys. Suddenly the molten ball swings clear of the purple haze and floods the city with a tremulous light. The vanes of the church steeples flash and blaze. The slanting roofs, wet with the night dew, glisten like burnished silver. The budding trees fill the air with their sweet incense, flaming pink and yellow, their tender branches quivering in the rosy light. As summer approaches, the rays of the Northern sun filters with mellowed softness through the quiet air. The yellow stubble promises possibilities in the way of prairie chicken and quail. The gentle whispering wind ruffles the cool waters, and dry, reedy cinders sing together a whispered monotone. As the days grow in length clangorous hosts of wild fowl visit every river and lake. Then it is that the keen eyes of thousands of sportsmen brighten in anticipation and the much loved operation of "looking over the shells" begins.

Signs of spring and summer are always welcome. The willows are yellowing along the old creek banks and the early birds are gathering about the summer "bargain counters." So much faith hath man in the truthfulness of at least one lady, Dame Nature, that before she has even promised another season he is ready for it. When the snow drifts are highest his thoughts lightly turn to summer duck suits, and although his winter coat is just paid for he is ready to examine the latest thing in that most novel of all novelties, the manly shirt waist. Though he may be destined for some time to come to shiver over the unreliable register or the pale gas log he has already entered into negotiations for the renting of the summer cottage that has neither register nor gas to recommend it. This

desire to be the first to grasp that thinning bit of hair, "Father Time's forelock," is a growing one that women feel with keenest eagerness. That look of peace that a woman wears when she emerges from her Lenten solitude may be mostly due to the fact that she has been laying up for herself treasures in Heaven, but some of its charm arises from the fact that she has safely laid away upon earth six new shirt waists in which to face a wicked world. An early appearance in one of these garments before the snow has melted or the sealskin gone to its summer home, is only another manifestation of womans' forehandedness. Procrastinators are still to be found and they are the people whose Christmas gifts are ready only in time to hang upon the lilac bushes and whose sweet pea seeds are put in so late that the frost catches the blossoms. But this melancholy band is steadily growing smaller.

Winter's fleecy cloak no longer covers the city pavements or country fields; earth's imprisoned life has broken the iron bonds of frost, and the ice sheath on the flowing Mississippi, cracked, shivered and crumbled into thousands of fragments, has been swept away southward toward the briny deep of the far distant Gulf of Mexico. Now the fields are green with sweet grasses; flowers perfume the air with their exquisite fragrance and all nature seems to be in harmony. The early autumn rains cause a shiver to run up and down your spinal column; the shivering farmer's wife speedily closes her window, saying aloud a superstitious prayer. In her rural belief, the screech owl, which rushes by her abode, seeking shelter from the falling rain drops, announces the "burvings" in turn, with glee and gloating. The long, long arms of the giant oak and elm, which for years past have served in the capacity of a wind break, stretch out their mammoth branches and close 'round the roof they love, menacing the wind should it harm the peaceful fold under the shade of their embracing green. The honest watch dog, with a deep mouthed howl, seeks shelter in the low vaulted barn, uttering baleful howls which bring a ready response from other canines in the neighborhood, and which causes the weired "hoot" of the midnight prophet, the owl, to fade and die out in the unfathomable paths of the nearby wood. A horse in the yard comes to the house for a closer proximity to his human friends, and stands close and still, lonely in the soughing wind which stirs his simple equine brain. A door slams suddenly and the good woman leaps to her bed and its old fashioned coverings as though ten thousand demons were seeking her death. The eerie wind lulls not, but rushes up the valley, chasing outstanding animals, which were neglected at nightfall, and scattering empty milk cans and pails in every direction, making night hideous with a thousand alarms.

But there are winds and winds. I like to be awakened in the night and hear, now soft, now low, the gentle, warbling winds, telling of wheat

fields and ripening corn, of meadows where the sheep lie huddled down in the fresh, green grass, barely moving the great aerial looms of the farm windmill and bringing dreamy, sensuous visions of fragrant apple, peach and amber grapes filled with sunshine, scarlet plums and the honey bee; nature's store house pictured and filled to overflowing for the grateful heart, for those whose eyes are turned on the hills, waves and sky—enthusiasts of the woods, who trace the sunrise path at morn and thank God for this wonderful gift to mankind.

This is indeed a wonderful age. In perusing the reports of the geological survey of Iowa I could not help but be impressed with the wonderful and interesting information I found therein, and my imagination pictured those prehistoric ages when monster animals roamed over the country whereon are now built beautiful cities and towns. We have the glacial period to thank for our beautiful scenery, no doubt, and wonderful indeed has been the result of its work. In many other ways can I praise the Upper River Country. Take for instance the country tributary to Lansing. Here is a beautiful little city, nestling among the green mantled hills of Iowa as though Nature, in one of her ever changing moods, had endeavored to shut her off from all intercourse with the outer world, but such was not her intention I am sure. The beautiful scenic effect here produced only enhances the view, and as a means of protection in case of severe storms, these hills are doubly useful. To one who has been accustomed to view these picturesque bluffs all one's life, their absence creates a longing and a desire akin to homesickness and is relieved only when you can once again reside in the shadow of their greatness.

"Of all that is good Iowa affords the best." This well known saying—well known to Iowa people, and in fact almost the world over—but too truly reiterates the sentiment of the Hawkeye inhabitants. Not only does Iowa afford the best in industry, but her scenic inducements are considered among the grandest in the Union—especially that portion of the state bordering on the Mississippi river. That territory adjacent to the stream is rich in tales and legends of the early days and much pleasure is accorded that person whose sense of inquisitiveness leads him to a study of Iowa's earlier history. For miles and miles on either side of the river may be seen some of the grandest, most awe-inspiring sights of which the human mind can conceive. Nowhere, except along the Rhine and in the Yellowstone region, can such soul-stirring sights be witnessed. Grand beyond description are these towering monuments of Nature's handiwork. Few who see them ever forget their seductive grandness. The region through which this mighty river wends its way offers countless inducements to the imaginative mind and to those whose eyes are harmoniously attuned to Nature. Here in company with these grand old hills one can almost feel that indescribable something which fills the air at early spring time

and makes us all long for impossibilities. The leaves with their bright colorings, the birds with their sweet reveilles, all bring to mind the early joys of boyhood. To roam these picturesque bluffs, unfettered by the grind and worry of business life, is indeed a boon, but how few there are who take advantage of it.

There is nothing more exhilarating than hill climbing. If there be any human being in the world who can look down with perfect propriety on the rest of his neighbors in the sphere of creation, or gaze over their heads and shoulders with an exasperating forgetfulness of their presence, it is certainly the elevated citizen who has gained the summit of one of our western hills. It is rather an easy accomplishment, in these days of steam and electricity to ride to the top of a mountain—Pike's Peak for instance—in the comfortable compartment of an upward moving railway train, but climbing these Iowa bluffs is a horse of a different hue. It means skill and exercise and exhilaration. It means working one's way upward along a hazardous pathway. It means skirting the edges of a precipitous ravine. It means jumping fissures and vaulting mammoth boulders. In fact, it means a combination of grit, pluck, energy and stability which few possess. The very roughness of the experience, the very unusual character of the undertaking but adds to the delight of the pastime. In the whole range of summer vacation projects there are none which repay with such a generous measure the exertion of getting ready and of getting away from home and the routine of business. Health, strength and vigorous life are a part of the gifts it offers in exchange, giving also a dash of absolute contentment and a happy joy in the mere act of living. Excursions to the hills surrounding us would form a delightful part of a summer's outing for people who desire a change. Life in the midst of these exalted altitudes is the nearest approach to life in another world that the terrestrial inhabitant may ever hope to attain, and it certainly offers the greatest number of facilities for enjoying that "something new feeling," for which the greater number of us pine during the summer months.

Lansing and vicinity offers the beauty of its mountainous scenery and the exhilarating tonic of its intoxicating air to all who approach its borders in the happy guise of open air pilgrims. Life out of doors is the only sort of existance to enjoy during the hot summer months. Mt. Hosmer, named for the famous sculptress, Harriett Hosmer, and one of the highest points along the Mississippi river between St. Paul and St. Louis, stands inviting all who chance that way to seek the healthful spirit that roams freely over its summit. The voices in the hills call soothingly to the tired body and the sublime beauty of their presence bids the weary city dweller to leave the cares of city life and harken to the message the summer winds impart. Of course, our little hills fall short of the more

imposing grandeur of Mt. Hood in Oregon and Mt. Adams in Washington, but nevertheless one can imagine much and dream of these grand old hills as something too beautiful for comparison. The former rewards the exertions of the sightseer with the lovliness of its surroundings and the wealth of its game; the latter is only another lovely elevated spot in the wealth of the picturesque scenery in which the great Northwest abounds, towering into the blue vault of Heaven covered with snow, their summits glistening like precious jewels in the dancing rays of an early Summer morning.

The mountainous scenery of the Mississippi Valley is a continuous succession of beauties and delightful surprises, but the joy of an outing in this "Garden of Eden" is best appreciated in other ways than in employing the customary methods of seeing its grandeur. Camping on the Mississippi is exhilarating sport fit for the gods accustomed to the freedom and joy of the heights of Olympus. Then the true beauty of the government's pleasure grounds is revealed to those who seek to know its worth. To the camper the river sings its most strenuous anthem. To the camper also the hill shows the tender side of its nature, which cares for even the least of the wild flowers. To the camper the sun shows its brightest colors as a kindly gesture of good cheer.

Every where throughout the rugged scenery of the New England range in the east and the more conventional beauty of our green mantled hills in the West the beauties of out-of-door life are emphasized by the twin spirits of freedom and exhilaration. The joy expressed in the enthusiastic words of the psalmist is felt in the very air of this hilly region, felt even by the inhabitants accustomed to their splendor and felt all the more poignantly by the weary tourist who has traveled to his restfulness and delight away from the flatness and bustle of city life.

The idea that the city answers very well for business, but that the country is the place for real delight in existence has been getting every year a firmer hold upon the fancy of the merchant, the manufacturer, the broker. To own a farm has become the aspiration of the same class who used to dissipate their surplus time and money upon the race track or the conventional tour of Europe. Busy men are learning that the key to recreation lies in a complete change of environment, not a mere transfer of attention. They wish to get away from contact with the "grind" which is wearing their nerves to shreds, and to bathe their souls in limpid peace, pure air and an expansive outlook. Our larger cities have always possessed their special corps of residents who fly away to the mountains when hot weather settles down upon the town to stay for a nice long visit—residents who are willing to forsake even the changing beauty of the lovely tinted lake—upon the shores of which their city may rest—for the serenity of the verdure clad hills. Seashore or pleasure resort almost always fail to as-

sert sufficient charm or attraction to weigh in the balance with the quiet, the rest, the peace, the exhilaration and the inspiring incentive of the hills. We all, or at least a majority of us, know its pleasures, all its surprises, all its perils, and we find that each recurring outing but adds to the enjoyment of the pastime. Signs of the times now indicate that in the future the exodus to the hills and mountains of the west will be larger than ever before, for the spirit of the woodland beckons gaily to the tired resident of the city, and who can resist her alluring gesture? Her garments spread around her like the wind buffeted drapery of Victory; her beckoning hands are filled with the fruits of her raising and her face reflects the peace of her clime.

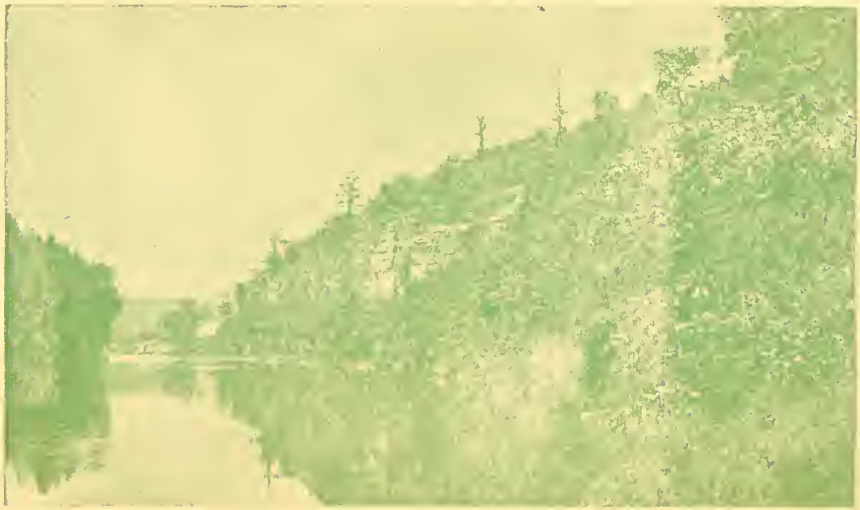
It is never a difficult matter to get up a conversation on fishing in this locality. Wherever two or more inhabitants are gathered together there is sure to be found one who knows a deal about the gentle art. As the long, cold winter draws to a close, and spring sends its gentle harbinger throughout the land, individual fishermen may be seen sneaking away for a brief recreation. As there are any amount of game fish within easy distance of Lansing, it is natural that these short trips are mostly made to places where rod and line can be used to advantage. Disciples of Izaak Walton could do no worse than visit these places occasionally for a change, for the real fisherman—the man who loves a fight with his fish before landing it—can find something worthy of his skill in any one of a dozen places in the region named. One half hour's "pull" from the skiff landing in a good rowboat brings one to the home of the vicious, courageous, small mouth black bass. Where the blue waters of the famous Mississippi forces its way triumphant and swift around the bases of the mighty hills and mingle with the less turbulent and muddy "Oneota", is the beginning of twice a hundred miles of noble fishing. There are deep pools and shallows, smiling stretches of still, blue water and tumbling acres of eddy and whirlpool, beset with boulders, between Lansing and the Gulf and all teem with bass. The bass of the Mississippi are as crafty, as lively and as gamy fish as anything ever found in the world's waters—not excepting the wary and timid trout. A pound and a half bass in these waters at the end of a hundred yards of silk line on a whisp of bamboo rod will make you think of the time when you held "yearlings" down on the old farm. Or one can board the train, and after a few hours journey, alight at some little station, contiguous to magnificant trout streams, seldom whipped by anyone except the casual farmer's boy of the neighborhood.

The country 'round about Lansing seems particularly well adapted for country life and sports. Beautiful spots seem ever at hand and with the river, the bluffs, and a quiet, dreamy existence, there are few places where recreation could be more ideal, and especially is this true when the fishing

season is open—"wide open"—as an enthusiast would put it. Some contend that the trout in this section are not what they used to be; possibly they speak the truth, but a grumbler is a grumbler the world over, trout or no trout. The trout streams in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin are far from being "short" on fish. However, fishing never was a sport that was much affected by statistics, anyway. There is no such thing as convincing the man or the boy, who has prepared for a day's trip down some little brook that the stream contains only three fish throughout its entire course. If it contains one it promises a hundred. Very few know how fast fish, especially trout, multiply, and the number may stretch out to the crack of doom! At least it will take a day's hard work, with the thermometer registering 100° in the shade, to lessen in the slightest degree, the zeal of the true fisherman.

The day's work should begin early, indeed it may begin the day before. The reels, the rods, the hooks, the lines and the bait, all have to be looked after. Tackle has a queer way of hiding when wanted, and in any case the fisherman will have made sure of his equipment. For there is always before his eyes the large number of handsome trout which he may capture. It is no definite number, to be sure, but still there is the possibility. Just before dawn, as he is preparing to start and sees the first deep purple of the morning peeping over the Wisconsin bluffs, he likes to dwell for a few moments on possibilities—not statistics! Then again, as he comes in sight of the brook, after a vigorous tramp over country roads and through dew laden pastures, he stops an instant to take in the distant musical murmur of the flowing waters and his mind pictures the big string of "speckled fellows" that lie in waiting for his bait. It is one of the glorious moments of life—it contains such possibilities. There is no lonliness in the day for him, even if he be without a human companion. The stream is companion enough. It chatters constantly in no monotonous fashion, alluring its ardent follower through woods, through meadows and through rocky pastures as long as daylight lasts. And when the sun is sinking behind the azure tinted hills he finds himself hardly ready to turn homeward or to camp. Though his basket is by no means full of fish, he still hears the sound of possibilities ahead of him. He goes to bed sure of one night's perfect sleep. He has been living the day in a world of ideals, forgetful of the strains and the worries of this life, forgetful of himself. And when a man forgets himself to the extent of throwing into a day's fishing his energy and his interest, he is very apt to return to this workaday world with better resolutions and happier thoughts. Some one has very truthfully stated that a smart man is never a success as a fisherman and I believe implicitly in the saying, however, for the author has put it to a very severe test.

In the upper country and in northeastern Wisconsin are also a number of very fine streams where fishing and boating are much indulged in by tourists on their summer vacations. In the northeast section of the state of Wisconsin there are rivers, it is said, where as fine trout are caught as in any of the Oregon or Colorado streams. Parts of these rivers, I learn, are extremely beautiful and the sportsman, while floating along the winding courses, can find plenty of entertainment in the scenery, when he gets his boat loaded with fish and has no room to carry more.



ONEOTA RIVER AND BLUFF OF TRENTON LIMESTONE

"FISH" STORIES.

"I only wish and wish and wish
That I could fish and fish and fish:
I'd like to sit the live long day
Upon a bale of prairie hay,
Down where the river sadly wails,
And fish for suckers and for whales.
'Tis shameful that on this free soil
A man must toil and toil and toil,
And grunt and swear and strive and groan,
And burst his martingale and moan;
Grow old and bald before his time.
In following the festive dime.
Ah, life would be a pleasant dream,
If I could sit beside the stream
With rod in hand, at early dawn.
No comrade but a demijohn:
The latter filled with lemonade(?)
To sit there in the drowsy shade:
What higher bliss could mortal wish?
Ah, let us go and fish and fish."

CHAPTER II.

"FISH" STORIES.

"WELL, I suppose you didn't leave anything in Big Lake," said a local sport when the fisherman came into the Boat Store and dropped into his old seat. The nimrod was tanned and blistered. He looked tired out and he bore the other earmarks of the man who has experienced "hunters' luck." The grocer grinned at the sport's salutation and turned to listen to the fisherman's reply.

"Well, I left a few things in it, yes," said the old nimrod thoughtfully. "I left a good spoon hook some place in it and I left a quart bottle of old 'tanglefoot' there that fell overboard from the boat, and 'pears to me I left a couple of fish. It isn't quite cleaned out yet."

"Where did you go?" inquired a bystander.

"Big Lake," replied the fisherman, "and it's the greatest place for fishin' that ever happened. Every day ought to be Friday 'round here. Say, there's nothin' else but fish."

"I havn't seen any of them yet," chipped in a newcomer, winking at no one in particular, but taking in the whole crowd, "but then I suppose the trout lines and trammel nets had all been robbed before you got there."

"Oh, come off; don't go to accusin' honest folks of what you'd do yourself if you got the chance. Don't you know that a man ain't allowed to seine fish in either Iowa or Wisconsin?" asked the fisherman in an injured tone. Why, I would have you all supplied for the next year if them ornary game wardens would let me alone. You can take just a certain amount of fish with you, shipped as baggage and accompanied by the owner. What do you think of that?"

"That's a handy law," said the grocer, for the fisherman. "It lets them out so easy when they get home. How did you come to lose that bottle of whisky? I wouldn't have been surprised if you had lost the fish or the boat, but I should think a man who has lived in Lansing as long as you have would hang on to a bottle of whisky in front of all the game wardens in the state."

"It wasn't the game wardens," said the fisherman, "although at that I might have got away from the lake with more fish if I had been better supplied with whisky. No, we lost that through our own foolishness. We were out 'still' fishing for bass one day. Natty was in the stern of the boat and I was rowing. We had about four lines, you know, and only two rods. Of course we had to fasten two of the lines to something in the boat and let 'em slide. I fastened mine to one of the rowlocks, but Natty was so far back in the boat he couldn't handle a set line from the rowlock, and what do you think he did? Tied the line to a quart bottle whisky we had in the bottom of the boat."

"That's what you had it in the boat for, wasn't it?" asked the grocer.

"Well, we took it along to help catch the fish," said the nimrod, but not quite that way. We went along all right for twenty minutes or so and then we both got a strike at the same time. I was wrestling with my fish and Natty was reeling in for all he was worth, when the whisky bottle got a strike also."

"Not the first one for the whisky bottle, I bet," suggested a spectator.

"I saw it give a jerk," went on the narrator, and that was the first I knew that there was a line fast to it. I yelled at Natty to grab the bottle."

"I can't let go of my fish," he says "it'll get away."

"Neither can I, says I, and just then the bass that the whisky bottle had caught gave a running jump and hauled the whole works overboard. I gave a gasp when I saw it going, but I wasn't going to lose my fish to save it. It floated for a minute and Natty made a grab for it and nearly tipped over the boat; just then, however, the bass made one more jump to leeward and down went the bottle."

"How did it happen that an empty bottle sank so easily?" asked the

grocer.

"It wasn't empty," said the fisherman, "it was full."

"And how long had you been out?" persisted the grocer.

The fisherman ignored this remark and looked reminiscent for a few seconds.

"That wasn't as bad, though, as the way I lost the spoonhook," he said at length.

"Go on, tell us about that," said the the grocery man, "we can stand for anything now."

"We were out early one morning trolling for any old thing that happened our way," said the fisherman. "and I had a swell spoon hook strung out behind the boat. Natty was rowing and he also carried the pistol."

"Pistol?" said the grocer, "what did you want of a pistol?"

"To shoot the fish, of course," said the fisherman. "You don't suppose anyone tries to haul Mississippi river game fish into a boat alive, do you? They'd kick you clear out of the skiff. No, sir; you have to shoot 'em. Well, we had rowed a half hour or so, when all of a sudden I got a strike on my spoon and the line went out whirling. I got hold of my reel and for a straight ten minutes I worked with that fish. I didn t know whether it was a bass or a shovel sturgeon, but I knew it was a whale. At last I got it up close enough so that we could see it, and we saw that it was a bass—about an eight pounder."

"Eight?" said a traveling man, in surprise, as he joined the group, "I didn't know they grew that small hereabouts."

The old timer slowly straightened himself, took a fresh chew of "Spearhead" and resumed his story, totally ignoring the slur which had just been tossed at him.

"Natty was ready with the pistol," he resumed, "and when I got the big fellow right up side of the boat he put the gun to its head and blazed away, and I'm blamed if he didn't blow that fish, spoon hook and all, right off the line. Yes, sir; the impact of the bullet was so heavy that the line parted in my hand and the whole cheese sank to the bottom of the old river. What do you'ns think of that?"

No one had the conrage to tell him and the crowd made a united rush for the 'poor' box.

It was a bystander's turn next. He rose to the occasion in a species of Yankee fashion, by indirection. He told a story in rebuttal with appropriate preface. Here it is:

"Well, gentlemen, I am going to tell you something that happened to me and three or four of the boys I used to go camping with every summer up at Battle Island. Of course we were all young fellows, and the prohibition atmosphere of old Iowa isn't calculated to develop that kind of sportsmen elsewhere, known as 'thoroughbreds', but I am independent of

what other people may think, and I want to say right here that it did not take any artificial applications to keep us going. Our spirits were inherent and in-bred and not carried with us in bottles. So you can understand that this incident I am going to tell you about is not a phantasy of any artificial exhilaration. We used to camp at the same place every year, and within easy access of Bad Axe, a little town on the Wisconsin side, on a sloping knoll. We had our tents, guns, fishing tackle and boats. We did not use our guns much, as the season was not yet open, but our fishing tackle was always in season, and we had great sport.

One evening one of the boys had a strike which caused an exclamation and told of a big fish at the hook. We all watched him with great interest and excitement as he played out his line which cut the water in large zig-zag circles away from the boat. He stood by manfully and a great fight followed. He was over an hour hauling in and playing out his line. Meanwhile we were crazy with excitement, and it is a wonder we did not upset the boat on several occasions, as we thought he was upon the point of landing his fish. But each time the big fellow plowed down and away until he was as remote from our frying pan as ever.

At last, however, we landed him with the help of a scoop net and barely saved our boat from upsetting in the effort. It was a bass and he weighed six pounds! That was enough for one evening. But one of the boys had lost his vest out of the stern of the skiff during the scrimmage. We began to drag for the lost garment with heavy sinkers on our lines and soon succeeded in grappling the goods. We hauled it up, but just as it came to the surface of the water we saw the pockets empty themselves of a big Elgin silver watch and three silver dollars. The hook had caught the garment on the lower side and it came up vice versa. There was no way on earth to hook the lost watch and money, which were forty feet below in the muddy bottom of the Mississippi, so we gave it up and pulled ashore. Two weeks later we went back to our homes and forgot all about the loss, while we told about the "ten-pound" bass we had caught that evening, getting our values back in that way many times over.

Well, the next year we went back again. We camped in the same old place and fished in the same old river. It was the last day before we were to break camp and return when one of the party hooked another big game fish in exactly the same bearings. We had a similar experience in landing him. After we had gotten the fish into the boat and started for the bank one of the boys noticed what appeared to be a swelling on the side of its head. We all examined it and pronounced it something very peculiar to fish anatomy. We were all of an investigating turn of mind, immediately, and as soon as the boat touched shore, out came our knives and we performed an autopsy. An incision made from the gills forward, toward the jaws, revealed a shining silver surface. I put my finger in be-

hind the object and, lo, and behold! if it wasn't the old Elgin watch. We were dumfounded and one surprise followed another when we opened the case and found that it was still ticking regularly and had only lost fifteen minutes. In our wonderment we searched further for the cause and discovered that the timepiece had lodged in the gills of the bass and that in the process of the fish's breathing those respiratory organs had played upon the stem winding apparatus and had kept it wound up."

The crowd, who had been listening to this narrative with mouth agape and eyes and ears open to their utmost capacity, were startled out of their wrapt attention by the fisherman, who exclaimed, wrathfully,

"Of all the blamed liars I ever hearn tell of, you do beat the Dutch."

He was allowed to go thus far when a warning look from those present told him he had better desist, and he sank back in his chair grumbling and muttering about 'some folks being such d—n liars.'

"Some of you people act as though you don't believe it," went on the narrator, but it is a fact and there is more than that to it. An hour later when we dressed that fish we found the three silver dollars and eighteen cents besides, the interest at six per cent for one year."

After the laugh, which followed this last statement, had in a measure subsided, the grocer exclaimed in tones, still choked with mirth,

"Curfew's ringin', gents; time to lock up."

The gang took the hint.

CANYON OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER

EXPENSIVE ENJOYMENT.

Some Liars I Have Met.

"Some men are visionary to a wonderful degree,
Their consciences are noted for their elasticity,
They shet their eyes to solid facts an' manufacture lies,
When truth will not increase their fame in other people's eyes.
They'll sit in corner groceries or stand upon the street
An' ladle out recitals Ananias couldn't beat—
They'll mould a fabrication like it was but common clay,
An' seem to think it not a sin to lie that way.

A man may be a Christian an' a pillar o' the church,
Who wouldn't, by a wicked act, his character besmirch:
He'll go upon a huntin' trip an' tramp 'till he is lame,
An' never git a cussed shot at any sort o' game:
Yet when he reaches home again an' gits into a crowd,
His bearing is most pompous an' his head he carries proud
While tellin' o' the beasts and birds his skillful hand did slay,
An' seems to think it ain t a sin to lie that way.

A follower of Walton goes a fishin' now an' then,
Some bait he takes fur fishes, some to soothe the inner man—
He'll whip the stream industrious from mornin' until night,
An', barrin' the mosquitoes, never git a cussed bite:
But from a handy market he will get a tempting string,
An' march along the pavement with a sort o' lordly swing,
An' show each one who hails him what luck he had that day,
An' seems to think it ain't a sin to lie that way.

'Tis so in every walk of life, exceptions there are none,
All men will crowd the limit when they talk o' what they've done.
When facts are weak an' shaky they have fiction cut to fit,
An' not a twinge o' conscience troubles them a little bit.
In business they are honest: they would scorn to tell a lie,
In every day transactions hold the truth almighty high,
But in their outdoor sports and pastimes let imagination play,
An' seem to think it not a sin to lie that way."

The angler baits his fishing hook
With worms that he has dug,
And while he waits for bites one hears
The gurgle of the jug.

CHAPTER III.

EXPENSIVE ENJOYMENT.

"WHAT I need, my dear," said Hawkins to his wife, "is a day or two of perfect rest and quiet in the country."

"Yes, dear, I've noticed that you are looking thin and worn out. I think rest and quiet are just what you need. I wish there was some place where you could find it."

"Well, I'll tell you. George Brown was asking me today if I wouldn't like to go up to Lansing on Saturday, where everything and everybody is quiet and unsophisticated. It's the only place to go for all of that and the people there are noted for their hospitality. He says that if a man is simply looking for a good time and wants a little quiet and rest sandwiched in between acts, Lansing is the place to go to. I've a mind to go."

"Why, of course, you must go, my dear. If you go up on Saturday morning and stay until Monday I know it will do you a world of good. I can just imagine you sleeping until 10 o'clock Sunday morning and then getting up to breakfast and feasting on freshly picked strawberries and rich country cream. In the afternoon I suppose you'll doze in the hammock or perhaps take a little stroll through the green woods."

Hawkins went down town after dinner on Friday night. "I've got to meet Brown," he said, "and complete arrangements for our trip."

It was midnight when he got home.

"We are going to take the 6 o'clock train," he told his wife when he had awakened her, "so that we will get to Lansing in the freshness of the early morning. I've got some frogs in this basket and some minnows in this pail and I suppose I might as well pack up my fishing tackle, though we don't expect to do much fishing. This, you know, is going to be simply a rest."

At 5 o'clock, after less than four hours' sleep, he was up again, and calling for breakfast. When he left the house he was carrying the frogs, a heavy grip, the minnows, a tin box of fishing tackle, a pair of high rubber boots, an old overcoat and three steel and bamboo fishing rods, the latter being wrapped separately in cloth covers and guarded with as much care as though they had been the family jewels. At the station he met three other men similarly accoutered. The station was already crowded with men, each of them lugging more bundles than the average woman is accused of bringing home from a bargain counter shopping expedition. The four friends and their traps were crowded into two seats in the smoking car and the train pulled out on time. Bronson, the banker, was attired in a blue flannel shirt and a soiled white canvas yachting cap. Edwards, the lawyer, had on a sweater and a black slouch hat. Brown, who has gained some notoriety owing to his fastidiousness as regards dress, was togged out in ancient overalls, and Hawkins himself was the star of the party with his antique pearl gray trousers and his stained canvas jacket.

Bronson took something from his grip and raised it to his lips. "Here's good luck," he said and passed it to the next. Then each of the men unwrapped his pole and commenced to wind and unwind silk fishing lines from reels. Incidentally, there was much talk of 'last year,' 'a ten pound bass,' 'up at Lansing,' 'tore the hook right out of his mouth,' 'got him up to the top of the water,' 'got away,' and similar perennial subjects.

After a several hours' run the train drew up at the depot at Lansing and the party of four got off. A farmer with a rickety sulkey was the only thing in sight, outside of the regular 'bus and the several drays. Brown hurried up to him.

"Is this Lansing?" he said. "And where's the rig to take us up to the lake?"

"The horses are all busy plowing," said the farmer, "and I couldn't git nothin' but this. I'll make two trips of it."

But the party was too anxious to get to resting to wait. Brown, himself, and Hawkins, who had come out to get perfect quiet and rest, agreed to walk and carry part of their things over the several miles of dusty country road, broiling in the hot sunshine. When they finally reached the farmhouse, the rustic showed them up to a little room, furnished with a bed, a chair and a cracked wash basin. On the bed was a hard and knotty mattress, filled with corn husks—or bricks.

"You'll have ter sleep two in a bed," he said. "You see most of our room is tuk up by the hands."

Down by the marshy side of the slough lay a couple of home made boats, sharp at either end. Upon arising the following morning the four men

from the city hurried down to them and pushed out into the slough. One man in each boat stripped himself to his shirt, and, laying his outer garments on the stern of his boat, started to manage the oars. The sun was high, and the water reflected both heat and light like a mirror. In the prow of each boat stood the second man, holding a short pole, which he waved frantically from side to side, the boat almost capsizing at each effort. Within an hour Hawkins, who was presiding at the oars in one of the boats, had raised a trio of beautiful blood blisters on each hand. Then he changed places with his partner and proceeded to beat the atmosphere with a steel rod. He called it casting for bass. He was working harder than he had ever worked in his life.

At ten o'clock, by which time Hawkins' nose had acquired a roseate tinge and his arms were aching with the somewhat unusual exercise, a sudden thunder storm came up. The boat was several miles from the house, and it seemed useless to try to make it before the storm broke. But Bronson bent to the oars, while Hawkins sat down on the bottom of the cranky boat, holding firmly to the gunwales on both sides. Five minutes before the rain came a gale of wind swept across the lake, throwing up whitecaps and sending a dozen big waves over the sides of the boat. Soon Hawkins was resting in two inches of water. Then the rain came across the lake like an advancing wall and soaked the four men to their skins. Right on the heels of the rain followed the hot sun and the boats turned again to the middle of the lake. At one o'clock they went in for dinner.

"Now," said Hawkins, "we'll get some good old country grub."

What they did get was fried pork chops, fried potatoes, fried doughnuts, ancient and tough radishes, and weak, lukewarm tea. They were served by a lady who said "huh" in a pained tone when Hawkins ventured to ask if he might have some cream for his tea.

"The women folks churned this morning," said the farmer, by way of explaining the absence of the cream.

After the meal Hawkins and his friends went out again to rest(?) some more on the lake. By four o'clock they were all in a state of almost complete exhaustion. Then somebody suggested "still" fishing. Hawkins rowed the boat to shore, a distance of a mile, to get a big stone to use as an anchor. When it was thrown out the stone slipped at once from the rope and the boat was finally tied to some bullrushes to keep it from drifting. Then Hawkins got what fishermen call a "tremendous strike." His reel buzzed like mad and the tip of his steel rod was pulled under water. Bronson, who prides himself on being an expert fisherman, got so excited giving advice that he dropped the oars and let the boat drift into the weeds. There the fish got tangled and it took half an hour's hard work to get it into clear water again. By this time the men in the other boat

had been attracted by the sight of the battle. They rowed up close, and after getting into a position where they were as much in the way as possible, started to add their counsel to that of Bronson. Finally the perspiring Hawkins, trembling from the exertion, succeeded in getting the monster to the side of the boat and with a last effort lifted it in. As it landed on the bottom board of the skiff Bronson, the expert, gave it but a single glance.

"By the gods, it's a dog fish," he said.

For supper the party had another variety of fried pork, with the same accompaniments in the way of potatoes and tea. In addition there was cake and three dried, stewed peaches to each man. When they went up stairs to survey the room where they were supposed to spend the night, Bronson made a protest. There was another fishing ground a few miles away, and he suggested that the farmer hitch up and drive them over where they could get something to eat and a shake down. The rustic was quite willing. The team would cost them $4.50 for the trip. They loaded their baggage and bundles into a springless wagon and started. The drive was over a rough road, full of mudholes and hummocks. It took three hours. At ten o'clock they drew up before an enlarged edition of the former abode.

"I don't think a little jaunt of this kind is complete without a little game on the side," said Bronson, after the party had got settled in their new and larger quarters. Accordingly they sat down and played poker until one o'clock in the morning. When the game broke up Hawkins had "dropped" $50.84.

They were called at five o'clock. Hawkins awoke with a splitting headache. He was stiff and sore in every muscle, but he hurried to get down stairs so that the day's pilgrimage for sport might not be delayed. They were served with half cooked bacon and coffee by a sleepy-eyed girl, evidently sulky and irritable at being awakened from her slumbers. After breakfast they again put out in a couple of boats Every cast was torture to the sore arms of Hawkins, and Bronson groaned at each dip of the oars, although neither man would have confessed it at the stake. Among the trophies which fell to the hook of Hawkins was a "bullhead." In taking it from the hook he scratched his thumb on one of its spines. The thumb immediately swelled up to an enormous size and turned a deep rich, purple color.

It was nearly midnight of the next day when the quartette reached home. Hawkins' wife met him at the door.

"Here, my dear," he said, holding up a string of fish. See what I have brought you."

On the string were a bullhead, a rock bass, a couple of croppies, a bass, a snakelike pickerel and a mudcat.

"Did I enjoy myself?" Well, I should say so. And, of course, I'll be glad to get up early and clean the fish for breakfast. I tell you there is nothing like a restful day in the country when a man is overworked."

We desire to say in conclusion that Mrs. Hawkins cleaned the fish.

THE "ELEPHANT," HILL OF CIRCUMDENUDATION, THREE HUNDRED FEET HIGH.

DEGENERACY OF SPORT AND WILD CAT HUNTING.

Perhaps you never heerd uv it, 'at silv'ry stream uv mine,
Which blinks all day in a drowsy way, while lilies bloom and shine;
It ain't in all the jogger-frys, it's some too sm .l' I 'spose,
It's way up in old Iowa where corn and taters grows.

It wiggles from amongst the hills fur up beyend the town,
Then laughs an' groans o'er roots and stones, an' rushes madly down
Till by an' by it stretches out to meet the ebb and flow
Then marches back an' forth all day like reg'lar soldiers go.

Upon the sunny wes:ern slope my boyhood homestead stands,
A tangled mass uv luvliness, the toil of loving hands;
An' frum the summit uv the hill is spread before my eyes
Old Lansing's spires an' steeples, a veritable paradise.

I know jest where the fishes live an' where the lilies grow,
An' where the birds talk lovin' words, an' where the muskrats go;
I know where lurks the wary trout, the bass and fisher king,
An' where to find new water cress, an' where the wild grapes cling.

An' on the moss grown bank I set an' watch the mirrored skies,
Each great white boat in cloudland float before my raptured eyes.
Bill Shakespere never loved his stream no better'n I love mine
Which blinks all day in a drowsy way where lilies bloom and shine.

CHAPTER IV.

DEGENERACY OF SPORT AND WILD-CAT HUNTING.

THE degeneracy of sport, meaning thereby hunting and fishing, must be admitted. The days of the nimrod are gone by, and a dismal but true picture is drawn by a writer of western fame, who shows clearly the artificial side of sport as it exists today. He tells how careful-

ly foxes must be bred and fed for the hunter to kill; how the rabbit warrens are cared for; and how the deer are kept in preserves and are so exceedingly tame that it is difficult to get them to run from the hunter and his pack of baying hounds; streams must be stocked with trout and salmon, and the fisherman must pay fancy prices for the privilege to fish them. This is almost the only kind of hunting and fishing left in England. The conditions are not quite so bad in America, but they are fast drifting in that direction. Big game is scarce, even in the far West. Fox hunting in the East is indulged in with tame foxes. Streams must be stocked with fish. In the West there are fish still to be caught without payment, and squirrels can be killed in the woods, while in many sections a few deer, outside of preserves, have succeeded in evading the hunter. But it is likely the day will come when hunting and fishing in America can be had only on the English basis. But, perhaps, by that time man will have improved so that he will not care to kill animals for the love of killing. That is the hope of the many friends of the dumb animals and it is not an entirely unreasonable expectation.

Take for example the bird on the hat. Volumes have been written on the subject, and it is sometimes asserted that in spite of it all, this decoration is more worn than ever. But this may be doubted. At any rate, any woman who chooses, and a great many do choose to wear a hat unadorned with the defunct body of a bird, can do so nowadays without appearing singular or ill dressed. The hope of the Audubon Society and of various other organizations for the protection of birds, is that the time may come when a hat trimmed with plumage will be as curious an object as the feather crown of an Indian warrior. One thing is certain, if fashion ever does take a decided turn in that direction, it is unlikely that the old barbarous custom will ever return. It is so essentially ugly and unpleasant in its suggestiveness that it need only go out of style for a few years to be discarded entirely. But there are people who, if gloves and belts made of tanned human cuticle happened to be the fashion, would wear them without more compunction than an Iroquois would feel in putting on his necklace of human fingers.

The custom of decorating women's hats with the plumage of birds is probably as old as headgear itself, and may have arisen in part from the notion common to many savage tribes that the qualities of an animal slain belong to the slayer. Moreover, before the invention of velvets, gauze and lace, the feathers of birds were among the most beautiful things available for the adornment of the human head. Tradition is partly responsible for the persistence of the custom in these later days. There is nothing pretty in its later developments, however appropriate the wings or body of a bird might seem on the head of a hunter's wife. The modern hat is

constructed to fit the modern face, and there is no beauty in the juxtaposition of a fair, intelligent, essentially civilized countenance and the body of a blackbird with its neck in a suggestive twist. It hints at ugly possibilities underneath the charm and grace of the wearer. As for the face which is not charming, or intelligent, or kind, the bodies of two or three humming birds or the head of an owl, speared with a hatpin and surrounded with bows of ribbon, lend to such a visage an aspect positively sinister.

It would be unjust, of course, to assume that there is real cruelty under all this passive obedience to the dictates of fashion. But since hats and bonnets quite as becoming and pretty can be evolved without the bird decoration as can be devised with it, it does seem that women of sense and feeling might be contented without shocking the sensibilities of the Audubon Society and outraging the fitness of things by causing a yearly sacrifice of bird life merely to satisfy a senseless whim. There was much sense in the retort of the little boy who, upon being reproved by his pretty Sunday school teacher for robbing birds' nests, and asked in pathetic tones where the poor mother was, replied, "She 'ain't sufferin' none, Miss, she's on yer hat." There is no excuse of ignorance to be pleaded. The public has been told over and over again that wearing ospreys means the death of multitudes of helpless little birds, since the feathers are best during the breeding season and the parent bird must be shot then. The fact that birds of particularly fine plumage are often skinned alive has also been made known: and the silence of woodland and meadow, where the milliner's agent has been, speaks for itself. It is about time this senseless and cruel fashion should go the way of the nose rings and the war paint.

The game laws in Iowa, my native state, and Wisconsin, are very strict. Few wild animals, however, are found in Iowa outside of the wolf and the wild-cat, the latter being very plentiful and a great fighter if cornered. It makes not the slightest difference to him whether he is called a bob cat, a wild-cat or a lynx, he is the same vicious animal in Iowa as he is in Canada, on the Pacific coast the same as on the Atlantic coast, and in all the intermediate territory—everywhere he is a plain everyday wild-cat and utterly devoid of kindness, except for his kittens. The color of the animal in different parts of the country is very dissimilar, but his disposition is alike in all countries. His length varies from three to over four feet, the longest and the heaviest being found in the extreme South. The southern species average about twice the weight and about a foot more in length than the Wisconsin and Iowa variety. There is no animal with a more fierce and relentless disposition than the wild-cat, and there are few creatures of its size that can whip it in battle. Its food consists of birds and mammals, principally smaller mammals, which it obtains mainly at night. However, larger animals are attacked, and deer are not rarely overcome by this cunning cat. It is a great destroyer of grouse and other woodland

birds and makes vast inroads on the rabbits and game birds annually.

A common manner of catching wild-cats is by the spring trap, and as these prowling fellows are not very cautious, they readily fall victims to the wiles of the crafty hunter. It is on record that a trapped lynx, with one foot confined in a trap, whipped a dog of more than twice its weight in one round of twenty seconds duration, after which it climbed a tree, dragging the twenty pound trap after him. There are sportsmen who will put themselves out of the way to corner a wild cat, especially if they have a pack of good dogs, but the sport, carried along these lines, is considered barbarous and only a hunter now and then is found who will let his dogs engage a wild-cat.

LANSING, ALLAMAKEE COUNTY, IOWA.

WINTER SPORTS OUT OF DOORS.

Just a dream of dear old Lansing (lawsey, but some dreams are sweet);
I seen the South wind dancin' over seas of ripplin' wheat;
All the air was full of fragrance, an' (o' course) a little dust,
But the birds was all a-singin' like their tiny throats would bust;
Far apast the whisperin' willers the gray road wound away,
Like a narrow shinin' ribbon dropped by giant hands in play,
Till all tangled up in sunshine it just melted in the blue
Smilin' sky which bent to grasp it, like a lovin' child might do!

Just a dream of dear old Lansing—but I seen where, deep and cool,
The swirlin' river dimpled into many a purple pool,
Where I knowed the fish was lurkin', peerin' with a wary eye
At the eddies where the "lucky bugs" went skatin', careless, by;
I seen the wary "rainbow" 'neath the sand-bank's shelvin' brink
Scatter into misty shadows when the cattle came to drink;
An' I heard the creakin' wagons toilin' up the long, long ridge,
An' the rhythmic ring of hoof-beats echo from the swayin' bridge:
Just a dream of dear old Lansing—I ain't homesick, not a bit!

I'm as happy as a medder-lark, but, oh, I'd like to get
Back again to dear old Lansing, jest to rest for one brief day:
Jest to let life's cares, like thistle-down, float dreamily away;
Jest to lay there in the sunshine, while the short, sweet hours pass
Till the solemn black-robed crickets droned their vespers from the grass:—
An' this longin' haunts me, haunts me, like a throb of endless pain—
"Oh, to be in dear old Lansing, jest to be at home again!"

CHAPTER V.

WINTER SPORTS OUT OF DOORS.

INSOFAR as they exist out door winter sports are quite as picturesque, quite as keenly enjoyed, and perhaps more beneficial proportionately, than those of summer. A torch light snow-shoe party winding its way at evening up the side of Mt. Ida would be an event not less romantic than real mountain climbing by daylight in summer. Any boy

would desert a "scrub" ball game for "glary" ice, or even for a coasting adventure; and the tonic effect of an hour's brisk exercise in the sparkling winter air upon the occupants of our over-heated houses has no parallel in summer's experiences. That we are too much "hived" up in winter; that persons not given to manual tasks have far too little physical exertion; that we have many colds because exposed to too little cold, are facts annually demonstrated, as people begin, toward spsing, to call upon their city druggists and doctors to get "braced" up. Though less discussed, our deficit in opportunities for out-door life is scarcely less serious in winter than in summer. For example, the children trying to play ball on a populous sidewalk in July are not a more pathetic sight than the same children trying in January to exploit with their sleds on a new snow fall on the same walk.

Great pains are taken in some of our larger cities to make the ice on all park pools available for skating. It is, perhaps, an undue aggravation of the present snowless condition of our immediate region to talk about sleds and sliding—time-honored and child-delighting sport of New England, far older and far more important in all the country side than skating, although the latter pastime is exceedingly pleasurable, and abounds much more in picturesque features and displays of athletic skill. Of skating there has been for many years a very "comfortable" season, and in both city and country it has been improved to the full. Even that, however, is less picturesque in city limits than out here among the hills, where the boys and girls start up the winding rivers and skate to adjacent towns. The solitary and adventurous skater has almost as good an opportunity for romancing as the fisherman, who loses the biggest fish and brings home the smallest, just to show that his intentions for telling the truth were good, since if the big fellow had not got away, would he not have brought that instead?

Skating stories are of many sorts; a really imaginative boy or girl can have many odd experiences in a ten mile expedition, what with "bendy-bow" ice and air holes. For example, I recall the chap who dropped into an air hole, floated down the river for half a mile, occasionally bumping his head against the ice, until he reached another air hole, when he came up all right. He certainly got wet, and he could show the air holes, and would, to anyone who would volunteer to go over the route with him. Let not that powerful skater be forgotten, who came to the verge of the dam sooner than he expected, while going at a high rate of speed—"about as fast as an express train"—as he expressed it. He had actually raced a half mile on the river, with the iron horse on the rails as an opponent, and as he could not check his speed, he arose to the occasion, gave one mighty leap, and landed like a bird forty rods below the dam, alighting so easy that he never felt the jar, but just skimmed on as before and arrived at the station five minutes ahead of the train. Nobody saw this, except at the time of hearing the story, then one saw the point just as plain as day, and besides, the dam was there, and the open space, measuring some forty

rods across was there. What more conclusive evidence could one look for?

For those of other predictions there are very rare charms in a solitary night exploration on skates—we refer to ice skates, of course. The glorious brilliancy of the moonlight reflected from the crystal ice; the glittering restlessness of the far off stars in the steely blue sky; the west wind that cuts across the tingling cheeks as a bend is turned, and which murmurs and whistles along the snow covered banks; the shadows of the hills, dark and sharply defined; the quiet pools covered with black ice, as transparent in the bright sunshine of day as plate glass, but now like black marble; the falling waters, gurgling beneath the covering of crystal, where some descent is made, and sending in advance great bubbles that force their way like living creatures, and then the steeper rapids breaking quite free of trammels for a space around which the skater carefully treads his way on the shallow rim of brittle ice; the surprise of the warmer air current now and then; the never freezing spring at the foot of some old hummock, whose waters make an open hemicycle as they enter the river—all these, and a certain wild transfiguration of the earth and the sky, a lonely and mysterious feeling that possesses the skater, as if he and all else were in some vison of enchantment—such are the charms of a solitary moonlight following of the river between the wooded hills of the Mississippi Valley.

Of the social side of skating, the scores of men, women and children who participate in the sport are a sure indication that the pastime as a social event is a grand success. There is little to say, however, on this one subject that is not perfectly familiar in any city where there is water, from New York's Central Park to the Gulf of Mexico. The social side of sliding, however, can not be had in the city. Even the children are totally ignorant concerning the more pleasurable features. The few streets they are allowed to make dangerous are quite too social; they are crowded and noisy and full of foul language and the hoodlums that use it. Nevertheless, this need not be so if the city children were as fierce for it as those of the country are, for there are pasture hills enough lying around the city, and what's a few miles walk for good sliding? One of the best slides that memory recalls could be made three miles long, if the road were in good condition, and while few, very few, would walk that three miles, and those few chiefly in order to say they have done it, yet the lower section of that slide, say from one-half to three-quarters of a mile long, was popular, and even populous, on bright nights—a superb slide it was, and yet a party of ten boys and girls, on a big double ripper, with a stout steersman, sweeping down the the steep pitches, flying into the air at every thank-ye-ma'am—and the landing from that flight tries the steersman's nerve and muscle—and finally shooting across the village square, up the opposite hill and half way over a bridge—that was something to remember. Sometimes there were disasters, it is true, for if the man with the tiller did lose his nerve, it meant scratched faces at the least, and a sprain or so, or even

a broken leg or arm. But the risk was part of the fun—just as in Alp climbing or Arctic exploration, and the results were, perhaps, as compensatory.

Winter is always welcomed by the "kids." She comes with frost in her breath and icy crystals in her hair, but to the children, in particular, her charms are irresistible. There is music in the crunching snow, intoxication in the tingling blood. Sleigh-bells chant a song of sentiment, and glistening stretches of ice are prophetic of human wings. Field and forest beckon the pursuers of wild things and fill the soul of all with awe. The home and the fireside are never so dear, and the magical alchemy of the human heart distills fresh happiness from the boreal blast, from the white mantle of mother earth and from the cold covering of river, lake and pond. Old age may shiver and count the cost of coal, but youth, warm of blood, buoyant of spirit and full of an abiding faith in the future, recks not of stiffened fingers nor of benumbed limbs, but glides gaily over the smooth ways and drinks in joy with every breath. It may be simple coasting with keen rivalry between the sleds, "Red Rover" and "Swallow," and there may be the excitement of "hooking on" to a bob sleigh driven by a crusty misanthrope ever ready to give heed to the mischievous salutation, "Hook on behind, mister?" With maturing years comes the straw ride with its dozen maids and dozen gallants tucked in under blankets galore and off for a ten mile trip by moonlight to a country tavern with steaming oyster stew and browned roast turkey awaiting their arrival What merry jesting and sly squeezing of hands, what fun from the tip-over in a snowdrift, what a rollicking zest in singing "good by, my lover, good by" or "good night, ladies," or any one of the favorites which give lusty lungs a fair chance to yell their joy to the night world! What would youth be without these sentimental journeys?

Man dreams eternally of flying, and winter feeds his fancy. With clear ringing steel wings he skims the frozen waters like a bird, and what so satisfactory to the human ego as the annihilation of distance in this flight across crystal plains? In milder moods the soul may be content with darting hither and thither over a confined space, and here again the eternal feminine element may lend its enchantment to the sport. Never is a fire so welcome as when blazing on the edge of a skating field, and never was the ambrosia of the gods sweeter than stolen potatoes roasted in such a fire and devoured with skins, ashes and all. There are restless spirits who love to roam far afield with gun in hand and dog to the front, seeking to satisfy the vanity of the human ego by pitting his cunning against the instinct dowered by kind nature upon the birds of the woods and the beasts of the fields. There is perfume in the scent of the woods, and the rhythmic whirr of the drumming partridge is pleasanter to the senses than the arias of "Faust." The forest is full of companionship. The snow-clad pines are mighty sentinels. The beeches and birches hum a lullaby, and even the wind-swept leaves have a life, which Thoreau has thus interpreted:

"Listen to the sharp, dry rustle of the withered oak leaves. This is the voice of the wood. It sounds like the roaring of the sea, and is inspiring like that, suggesting how all the land is seacoast to the aerial ocean. It is the sound of the surf, the rut of an unseen ocean—billows of air breaking on the forest, like water on itself or on sand or rocks. It rises and falls, swells and dies away, with agreeable alternation, as the sea surf does. It is remarkable how universal these grand murmurs are, these backgrounds of sound—the surf, the wind in the forest, waterfalls, etc.—which yet to the ear and in their origin are essentially one voice, the earth voice, the breathing or snoring of the creature."

Again the fleeting glimpse of a white-furred hare, disturbed at its cold dinner by the baying of its four-footed enemy, may entice the human pursuer across open fields and onward to far regions in an alluring chase that wipes out all sense of time, fatigue and distance. Trudging his weary way homeward, the hunter may well commune with his own soul and find consolation in the philosophy of that gentle apostle of nature, Thoreau, who has drawn this lesson from the snows and their betraying tracks. Why do the vast snow plains give us pleasure, the twilight of the bent and half-buried woods? Is not all there consonant with virtue, justice, purity, courage, magnanimity; and does not all this amount to the track of a higher life than that of our dumb animals, a life that has not gone by and left a footprint merely, but is there with its beauty, its music, its perfume, its sweetness, to exhilarate and recreate us? All that we preceive is the impress of its spirit. If there is a perfect government of the world, according to the highest laws, do we find no trace of intelligence there, whether in the snow or in the earth or in ourselves—no other trail but such as a dog can scent? Is there none which an angel can detect and follow—none to guide a man in his pilgrimage, which water will not conceal? Is there no odor of sanctity to be preceived? Is its trail too old? Have mortals lost the scent?

Are there not hunters who seek for something higher than foxes, with judgment more discriminating than the senses of fox hounds, who rally to a nobler music than that of the hunting horn? As there is contention among the fishermen as to who shall be the first to reach the pond as soon as the ice shall bear, in spite of the cold, so it is with the hunter who comes forward to take the field as soon as the first snow has fallen; so he who would make the most of his life must be abroad early and late, in spite of cold and wet, in pursuit of nobler game, whose traces are there most distinct—a life which we seek not to destroy, but to make our own, and which, when pursued, does not earth itself, does not burrow downward, but upward, takes not to the trees, but to the heavens as its home, which the hunter pursues with winged thoughts and aspirations and rallies his pack with the bugle notes of undying faith. Do the Indian and hunter only need snow-shoes, while the saint sits indoors with embroidered slippers? Then there are the quieter joys of the home and in the evenings

the parties and bees. What simpler pleasures than the poping of corn or the snapping of apple seeds on the red hot stove? What amusement more useful, and at the same time fun provoking, than the spelling school? When is cider so sweet and freshly cracked nuts so acceptable? When is there such a rollicking zest to blind-man's buff, drop the handkerchief, button-button-who's-got-the-button and a score of other old time favorites? What keener delight to the intellectual soul than a quiet night before the hearth with a good book and a dish of Northern Spy apples?

"Sliding on the crust" is another good feature of winter life in the country. Let such a queer mixed storm as generally prevails, with rain and a brisk breeze to finish off, and all the hills will lie gleaming in the sun with a stiff covering of concreted pellets, then what fun there is for the sleds and "sliders!" Then no one course is open, but everbody has a course of their own. Take down the pasture bars, through which the old cow has found her way for so many months past; down with the old Virginia worm fence, which marks the boundary line between two fields, or opens into the road, and aim for the eight or ten foot opening from any place on the hillside that happens to strike the fancy. It requires a sure eye, a steady foot behind and a sturdy girl in front—one who will not squirm or scream more than enough to keep up the excitement—to make for that particular break in the fence line. But I forget. All this happened in the days when the rail fences were the boundaries; the barbed wire has limited that sport. Another way of enjoying crust sliding in the old days was to cross leather straps, cut from the "old man's" number "6's," over barrel staves, a little forward of the middle, and thrusting the feet into these stirrups, ride the stave horses down the uncertain side hill. Talk about your Norwegian skis—! What a way the staves had of spreading out, until down the rider sat and slid on his beam ends as far as gravitation would carry him. This mode of travel is not yet obsolete, although it belongs to the days when Bayesen's Norse stories—more than any other—had introduced to knowledge the real ski, which I fancy very few Yankees ever manage, any more than they have managed snow shoes.

Another phase of the country children's winter pleasures is afforded by the hollows in the hills where the rain has, very considerately, formed a temporary pond, and the water drying out underneath, lets the ice down to the bottom and presents a thrilling opportunity for an adventure on sled or skates. To get a good start, dash down one side of these natural bowles with all the vim and vigor possible and essay to climb the opposite slope by sheer momentum—this is truly heroic. Caught in the bowl; to climb its crevasses and escape imprisonment is a problem indeed. In the most desperate cases, one digs out by cutting steps with a jack knife, just as those persons, flying from wolves, have had to do in the stories that so work upon the mind of the young reader; and imagination never fails to supply the wolves. Yes, there are good things for the children and their seniors in a good old-fashioned country winter. The subject is almost as

inexhaustible as the snow and ice themselves, and as splendid as the crystal storm whose dress of flashing gems sparkle in the sunlight, from the trees and from the house tops, and when the keen, biting "north wester" sweeps across the forests and the fields, once ripe with golden grain.

LANSING, SHOWING CITY PARK.

A WELCOME TO THE BIRDS.

CHAPTER VI.

A WELCOME TO THE BIRDS.

MUCH of the most magnificent river scenery within a few hours reach of our big cities is to be found in the states of Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, where perhaps more of the fishing and boating enthusiasts go than to all the other states put together. Most beautiful of all of these streams is the world famous Mississippi. In this stream is to be found both bass and pickerel, but with all of the boating fraternity, excepting the most ardent anglers, the beauties of the stream, with its high rocky banks, outweigh the piscatorial advantages: however, the Wisconsin river, which flows through the "Dells," famous the world over for its beautiful scenery, is not far behind the old "Father of Waters" in this respect. In upper Wisconsin are found the wilder streams, in the less thickly populated parts of the state. Here genuine canoeing can be indulged in to the fullest limit There are located on the banks of many of these streams Indians, who in the summer time, make it a business to paddle tourists up and down the winding water courses. These streams are, in many parts, far from civilization, and the rugged beauty of the rolling banks has never been marred by the axe of the lumberman. Hundreds of people make for these fascinating rivers every summer, where they can get the most perfect rest and recreation of the needed character. A more perfect contrast to the city could not be found, and those who are seeking the enjoyment of reveling in wild and uninhabited territory will find it here. The forests, skirting the banks of the streams, are composed almost entirely of pine, and it is said that the health giving odor from these trees is the incentive which lures so many people, almost as strongly as do the untold quantities of bass and muskalounge that overrun the majority of the streams. Here the camper is in his glory. Many sleep in the open air on beds of pine boughs.

Along some of the streams and long floating routes, composed of both rivers and lakes, the Indians have built log camping stations at intervals, the length of a day's travel. Each night, with their open air enthusiasts, the Indian guides stop at these log huts and resume their floating journey the following morning.

What is more grand to these lovers of nature, on arising in the early dawn of a spring morning, to hear the familiar call of the robin, then follows the bluebird, and May brings the oriole. He has returned to his old nest in the tall elm. Day after day his modest little wife, in her gown of green, sits on the cozy nest, while the lord of the manor perches on a slender twig above her, his saucy black head tipped to one side and singing with all his might. It is a great happiness to welcome these little wanderers home from their all winter's stay in the south; to be prepared with food for our ever ready little songsters when winter steals back with blizzards

and snow storms and frost, which tightly locks bird graneries. Not only has home hunting begun, but some of the brave little mothers are already settled to their summer's work. Owls may be found sitting on nests decorated with icicles. Some of the ground nesting birds make their snug cradles before the snow melts away, and are found buried with their eggs, under the snow, but still cheery and hopeful.

That eccentric bird, the crossbill, "with songs like legends strange to hear," who pays us fleeting visits from the land of snow and ice, sometimes sets up a home in our climate, beguiled, perhaps, by the snow and ice of the early spring months. Even our matter-of-fact friend, the robin, sensible as we should expect her to show herself, even she sometimes grows impatient to see her young family around her and goes to housekeeping too soon. More than once has the little mother been found faithful, but frozen, on her nest. We all, or a majority of us, know of the tragedy of the bluebirds, who a few years ago, perished by the thousands, owing to excessive cold. But as a usual thing the feathered folk weather the storms, seek out some warm retreat among the close-growing evergreens, fluff out their feathers and bear their reverses like philosophers.

Spring is the time to study the language of the birds, for in that season of home making and nursery duties all the varied emotions of their lives are called into play. Unlike the rest of the year, they are bound to one place. They can not flee from things unpleasant—they must stay and battle them. The importance of selecting a safe retreat for nesting, the constant watch for enemies, the many and varied dangers that threaten, make these anxious days, and bring out characteristics seen at no other time. Then when setting is over there is a nursery full of helpless nestling to rear, to protect from accidents, to provide with food, to instruct in the right path in life. All these make spring the most serious and eventful, as well as the most interesting season in their lives. At this time the conversational abilities of our little friends are in full play, and they are far greater than is usually supposed. Besides the well known songs and calls with which all lovers of nature and her creatures are familiar, there are many low notes with the mates and the young that bless the ear of the sympathetic bird lover alone, and force him to the irresistable conclusion that these low sounds are exchanges of sentiment—talk in fact. No one who has closely studied birds at this period in their lives, doubts that they have some sort of language.

> For what are the voices of birds,
> Aye and of beasts, but words, our words,
> Only so much more sweet.

Birds have been known to consult over their difficulties, sometimes to dispute, to quarrel, to settle upon a line of action and to make little remarks —in bird language. This may be observed with great clearness in captive birds. Where one bird of a certain species will pass his days in silence, except when singing, two of them will keep up a constant chatter. Conversation may be seen, too, in the sparrows of our streets, who are great

L. of C.

talkers. If we could understand we might get their opinion of us and of our doings, which they watch with so much apparent interest. It would be interesting, though perhaps not flattering, to know how human life appears from the birds' point of view.

No one will question the assertion that birds can scold. Orioles are the most proficient in this accomplishment—especially the orchard oriole, who can hardly deliver his sweet song without the interpolation of scolding notes. The world seems to be all wrong with this little fellow; even his wooing is rather a savage affair, and conducted with many hard words. His little mate has plainly learned to manage her domineering partner, for, in the few I have known, she never talked back, but went quietly on and had her own way in spite of his blustering. The house wren, too, is a bumptuous individual, always ready with an opinion and speaking his mind on every occasion. The "fire-winged blackbird" is another who takes the burden of the whole world on his shoulders, while his mate is setting, and protests vigorously at the intrusion of anyone upon the territory which he claims as his own. Not only does he make it uncomfortable for the feathered world, but he has no faith in the honest intentions of the human race. Sound reason he has, too, for that opinion, for he is one of the prosecuted.

It is doubtless because of this bird's arduous labors in protecting its family that as soon as the young can look out for themselves he returns to his bachelor ways. In a gay flock all the fathers of a neighborhood depart, leaving their mates and young to shift for themselves. This is a rare occurrence among birds, who are usually model parents. Most of them not only feed and train their little families in the way they should go, teach them their manners and their songs, but they submit to imposition of the true American style, at their hands.

Nothing impresses the intelligent student of bird manners and customes more strongly than the "human nature"—so called—that they display. Their loves and hates, their anxieties and fears, their joys and sorrows, are plain to be seen, and their peculiarities of character are very strongly marked. There is a great diversity among them as among one's human acquaintances. They show individuality in disposition and manners, and they do not exactly resemble one another, even in appearance. A close observer comes to know individuals, not merely species. Keepers of birds have long recognized these facts. This is what gives the study of bird life its great and lasting charm. Each new bird is a fresh subject, and nesting time offers the golden opportunity to make their acquaintance. There are reasons for the protection of birds aside from the consideration that they keep down the insects which destroy plant life. Birds have a mission other than that of acting as orchard scavangers. They have their esthetic as well as their practical uses. There are strong sentimental reasons why they should be guarded against harm. They belong to the landscape. The green foliage would be silent and the blue sky would be dull without

them. There would be no music in the air at morn or eve were the little feathered songsters gone. The poet would mourn the lark and the thrush should they vanish from their leafy haunts and the painter would not be happy without the robin and the sparrow. The birds have been man's friends from the beginning. They have made tuneful the groves; they have built their nests under the home rooftree: they have twittered around the doorsteps of humble habitations and, in their ceaseless industry and glad enjoyment of life, they have been eloquent exemplars to man, whose protection they should enjoy.

Drifting down the river on a summer's afternoon we hear from a hidden thicket the catbird's cry: and a brown thrush, startled by the clank of the row locks, flits away through the under brush, piping shrilly. As we drift between the shaded banks and great fields of tall, wild rice waving in the summer's breeze, hundreds of blackbirds, who have been feeding on the rice seeds, rise in the air and for a time make the welkin resound with the rush of their wings. A long legged crane watches us from the mud bank across the stream, and in the shallow water of the sand bar, which reaches far out into the river, a little sandpiper wades in search of food. Suddenly there is a flash of scarlet; it is the tanager, a native of Wisconsin, who in some unaccountable manner has strayed to the Iowa shore. In the blue sky above us a huge and gracefully sailing hawk is visible, with his wings spread wide. In the fast deepening twilight we moor our craft and as we take the homeward path the night hawks circle about us utterly indifferent to the presence of man.

FRONT STREET, LANSING, IOWA, WITH MT. HOSMER IN THE DISTANCE.

QUAIL AND PARTRIDGE HUNTING.

CHAPTER VII

QUAIL AND PARTRIDGE HUNTING.

ECROSS the wide stretches of Iowa and Minnesota stubble the morning sun is just rising—first turning the black of night into gray and then overlaying the gray with purple and gold. The spirits of the dawn are stirring and they are whispering "hope." The cattle in the pastures lazily rise with grunt and groan and make their way to the running waters. From farmhouse chimneys come thick streaks of wood-fire smoke. One may be sure that "the woman of the farm" is up and that "the man" has just turned over in bed for another thirty minute nap.

A white frost has spread itself all over the land that a month ago carried the burden of the harvesters, the whirr of the threshers and the call of the gleaners making sure no waste was left behind. A wagon rumbles as it comes to a county bridge; the hoofs of the flat-shod horses beat with roughness on the stiff earthen road. In the west the morning star winks at the earth on which humans rise from sleep with so much trouble. In the wagon sit four men: one drives, the other three suck short stemmed pipes and drowse against guns which stand within their arms.

"Ugh," says one man: it's cold."

He fishes in the pockets of his corduroy jacket and finds a bottle. Each man puts it to his lips. There is a low gurgle heard and then a satisfactory smacking of lips. The pipes emit fresh clouds of smoke and the aroma of tobacco lingers over the country way.

The wagon comes to a clump of trees beside a stubble field. There the horses are taken from their burden and hitched in their shelter. The driver points toward the stubble and says in half a whisper:

"This is Thomson's patch, eighty acres; you work it from here west. Beyond is Glover Lake and you go around that 'bout a mile. Then you come to Smith's eighty, and I guess by the time you get over that you'll have had all the fun you want for a day. 'Spect you'll get back here 'bout four?"

"Yes, said one, "if we find chickens."

"Can't miss 'em in there. Fine stubble, and nobody's been bothering 'em this season. Birds are plump this year and not a bit leery since the pot hunters have been driven out. So long."

The men have three fine dogs, which during the drive to the stubble, were asleep in the rear of the wagon. Now they are like race horses just before the start. Trained to obey every beck and call of their masters, the pointers make no wild dash into the stubble as a mongrel would, but await the word. The men are examining shells, guns and gamebags or pockets and belts. The driver is bringing to the ground, from the wagon, a Dutch oven, significant of what the ending of the day is to be.

The men climb through a "snake fence" and speak softly to the dogs.

The law has decreed that chicken hunting shall begin on this day. Until this day the gamey birds of the American West have been free for a year from the hunters. At this moment they are not as wary as they will be a few days later, when the sound of hundreds of guns shall have frightened the wits out of them and driven them to secret hiding places. The dogs have the word. Into the frost-marked stubble they go; not with leap and bound, but with stealthy tread and nose close to the ground. Each man follows his own dog, gun at half rest, eyes keen, every muscle taunt. These men have hunted before. This is the one annual recreation they enjoy. The fresh sweep of the morning air intoxicates them, and counting room and business house are blotted out of the mind, and in their wearisome place comes the fields of stubble, autumn-kissed.

A dog halts; he points: his tail is as straight and as stiff as a ramrod. One instant of silence and then a whirr of wings, a beating of the crisp air with powerful fans, and the first covey is up. Up, up, up, the half-dozen birds go, not straight, but diagonally.

"Bang! bang! bang!" One man is so quick he uses both barrels and gets a bird for each shot. Of the six that rose four are down and the other two far away. The dogs bring in the prizes—quivering little bodies, and they disappear quickly into the yawning mouth of the game bags. The dogs resume their work. They nose every shock, avoid the cold scents, and look for the last night's resting place of the birds. Suddenly up and about them, almost in the faces of the hunters, rise an enormous covey. Perhaps there were thirty birds in it, maybe fifty. The dogs were at fault in that they did not warn their masters quick enough. One hunter does fire, but he merely clips the tail feathers of the last bird and does not get him. His companions laugh softly. One calls the dogs back, and each gets a sharp talking to, a talk which, doglike, is understood. The animals seem more shamed than the men that the birds should have surprised them. The men decide to separate and meet later in Thomson's "eighty."

The sun is out of the east now and climbing the sky. The man who has turned to the left uncovers a number of birds and bags a half dozen in the first half mile. He throws himself down in the rough field for a moment and brings out from his coat a hard-boiled egg, a sandwich and a Russian caddy of cold tea. In town this man is worth his hundreds of thousands. He is a hard, bargain-driving business man when at home. He feels he must be to hold his place. Out in this stubble field he is alone. Something begins to warm his heart. He tosses the dog a bit of meat, pulls long at his bottle and fills his pipe, being careful to drop no lighted match in the dry waste about him.

"I was brought up on a farm like this," he says to himself. All the hard lines in his face have gone. His own wife would hardly know him. His hands touch the yet warm bodies of the birds, and he sympathetically

mutters: "Poor little things."

He feels that he ought to get out into this wilderness oftener; that he is missing something out of life by staying away from it. He wonders that he has never noticed before what a fine old gentleman the sun is early in the morning. And frost? He never knew before that frost could make so many pretty pictures in stubble. He asks himself why that kind of a breeze never comes stealing into his place of business.

"Couldn't work a minute if it did," he says to himself with a grin.

His dog is restless.

"I'd forgive my worst enemy this morning," says the man, and rises. The dog goes straight to a stubble patch thirty feet from him. The birds come out of it as if in millions. He gives them both barrels and gets six.

"Guess the 'old man' isn't so old after all," the hunter laughs.

Now he tramps uphill and downhill, following the earth waves of the farm. Here he misses an easy shot, there he gets a difficult one, and far away he hears the guns of his comrades. A lake looms in view and he gets down on his banquet-tortured stomach, right down in the sand and mud, and "smooches" his face in the clear waters. He drinks as his dog drinks, and wonders if savagery has not some permanent charms. Now he has a mile of hard footing and no game. The birds he has brought to earth grow heavy. The gun seems to weigh more than it did earlier in the day. The dog is not as chipper as he was. But both keep at it and they play fair with the hard-flying birds. No ground shots are tried, and the birds are thus given the full benefit of a complete rise; no shot is taken until the beauties have had a last show for life.

"If they get away then," says the man, "they are entitled to their freedom."

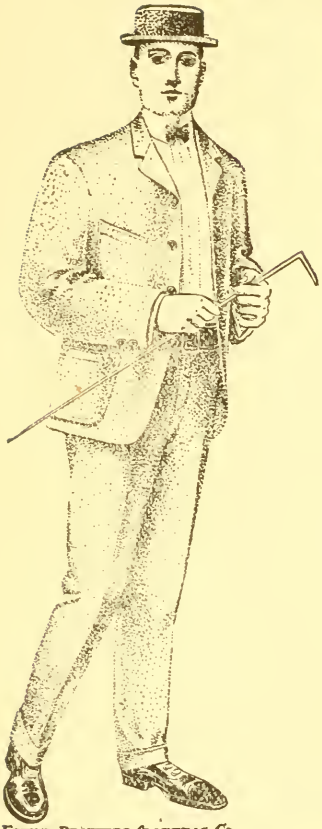
His comrades join him in Smith's "eighty." They count birds. The trio have sixty-five and it is after three o'clock. All the lunch they carried in their pockets has been devoured. They start back for the wagon. Their man is waiting for them. He has a fire burning under the Dutch oven and the pot is full of boiling water. He beheads bird after bird, draws it, strips the feathers, and drops the bodies into the water. He also throws in a generous supply of onions, carrots and potatoes. Then a big lump of butter secured from a farmhouse and much pepper and salt. The men lie about the fire smoking. The odor from the pot tantalizes them. When it is finally set before them and long spoons and forks given them they pitch into the savory mess like wolves. Did you ever eat a bird cooked that way, out in the open, with a big moon coming up in the east, and all your creditors one hundred miles away?

After the feast, a little liquid refreshment, then the pipes and a story, then into the wagon and back to the country house for a long night's sleep.

The moonlight floods the three men as they ride back in the wagon. In the stubble the birds are "peeping" lightly after the worries of the day. The dogs are asleep. Here and there a star marks the heavens. The night wind has come after that of the dawn. Light in farmhouses flash out, live a moment and are gone. An express train rumbles across the country, a meteor mocks it in the skies. Horses in the field neigh at the passing team.

This is prairie chicken hunting.

THE END.



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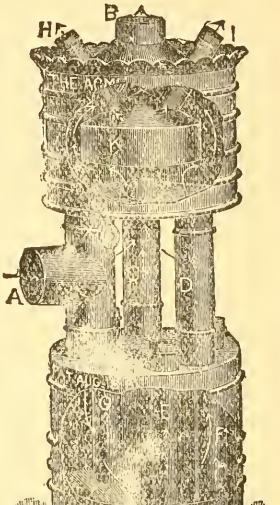

1. Its great economy. It burns no fuel, uses only smoke and wate heat from the stove or furnace.

2. It secures complete circulation of air in the room where it is placed, thereby contributing to both health and comfort.

3. It saves coal bills. When attached in the same room with the stove, it wil heat the room quicker and better, often saving more than half the fuel.

4. It saves wood. The saving in time used in cutting wood will soon pay for the heater. It may be also attached to oil stoves with good results.

5. It will heat an extra room without extra fuel, and often with less fuel than was used with the stove alone to heat one room.

6. The kindling wood used in starting a coal fire in connection with this heater, will warm a room in half the time the fire would after it is started.

7. Can be attached anywhere between the stove or furnace and the chimney, in the same room, or adjacent room, or on any floor above.

8. It is cheap. A saving of ten cents a day for four or five months will pay for one. The saving of fuel will pay for one many times over.

9. It is clean, neat and handsome in appearance. An extra stove may be taken out, or an extra room warmed, with no dirt, no ashes, no extra fuel to supply.

10. The Acme Heater is sold on its merits. Any person having use for it, may have one placed in his house, store, or shop where it may be given a thorough trial, and if not as represented it will be removed without expense.

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